Long-term export contracts with friendly countries

1612. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to enter into long-term export contracts with friendly and neighbouring countries, following the signing of long-term agreements between India and USSR;

(b) what are the areas identified for exports to USSR; and

(c) what steps are being taken for the required investment and the development of infrastructure to support them?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) No, Sir. Commercial contracts for exports are concluded by private sector firms and public sector entities and not by the Government. While long term export contracting is a desirable objective and the Government helps identification of potential for exports on long term basis, it will be for the exporters to explore the feasibility of such contracting, taking into account the relevant factors like price, delivery period, etc.

(b) and (c) The main areas identified for exports to the USSR are agricultural items, minerals and ores, leather and leather products, textiles, chemicals and allied products and various engineering goods. Government have already provided a number of incentives, facilities and assistance towards promotion of export of these items. Recently a Working Group has been set up to promote production cooperation, co-production and promotion of cooperation in the industrial field. Long-term strategies have also been drawn for export of certain core commodities.

Collection of Provident Found

1613. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the amount collected under the Provident Fund and the amount paid for settlement of claims during the Sixth Plan Period, year-wise;

(b) whether Government have any plans to effect changes in the law of settlement of Provident Fund claims of the employees to reduce the arrears; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) The total amount of provident fund contributions realised from covered unexempted establishments under the Employees' Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, and the amount